Frozen Lake

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Frozen Lake

by sourweather

Summary

"What are you afraid of?"

Will sighs. "When I was little, I read a story about a boy who was trapped under a frozen lake."

Notes

idk it was 5 am and I love how traumatized they are

See the end of the work for more notes

- Translation into Русский available: Озеро, покрытое льдом by Gays_Lover

"What are you afraid of?"

Will blinks. He'd been in danger of falling asleep, before Hannibal spoke. Grave danger. He stretches, pressing himself closer to the warmth at his back.

"Would you believe me if I said clowns?" He quips. Hannibal's laugh raises hairs on Will's nape.

"Maybe."

A soft smile plays over his lips, the tips of his fingers circling Hannibal's knuckles. "When I was little, I read about a boy getting trapped under a frozen lake," he says after a moment. "It wasn't even deep, but his muscles seized up when he fell in, and by the time he tried to swim to the surface, he was too weak to break the ice. I used to have nightmares about being that boy."

"'Used to'." Hannibal reiterates.

Will huffs. "I have more interesting nightmares now."

"Are you still afraid of that? Falling through the ice?"

His shoulder brushes Hannibal's chest when he shrugs. "Not really, no. I've been ice fishing plenty of times, it's never gone wrong."

Silence covers them like a thick blanket. Hannibal's fingers stroke patterns over Will's heart. His eyes start to slip closed again.

"You once told me that you were afraid of not knowing who you were."

Will laughs. He twists enough to shoot Hannibal a playful glance. "I know who I am, Han."

"I know." He presses a small line of loose kisses over Will's pulse. "And I know who you are."

Their legs tangle beneath the blankets. Will drags his foot up Hannibal's shin, then down again. "I'm not afraid of anything," he says at last. "I'm bigger and meaner than anything that goes bump in the night. Just like you."

He doesn't need to look at Hannibal to see the proud expression on his handsome face. Hannibal presses a kiss to the crown of Will's head, unsubtly smells the honey and ginger in his shampoo. When he speaks, it's with a careful slowness. Curated.

"I fear... snowy mornings," Hannibal says at last. "Just as the sun is rising, when the sky first starts lightening and the world feels especially pale. The moments before a proper dawn, which leaves me with an unshakable feeling that I am not meant to be awake."

Will shuffles in bed, pressing his spine to Hannibal's torso more insistently. Hannibal's arms fold around him.

"I fear ribs visible through skin, and plain white rooms, and glass walls. I fear losing you. When I wake in the morning, to find your side of the bed empty and cold— for just a moment, I feel fear."

Will takes Hannibal's hand from where it lies over his heart, kisses the center of his palm, the scars on his wrist. He presses the hand back against his breast, letting him feel the living organ beneath.

"And then they pass," Hannibal whispers, and the sigh of relief isn't lost on Will. He kisses the space just below Will's ear, nuzzles him affectionately. "Dawn breaks, and the glass wall is recontextualized as nothing but a large window, and I find that you are merely outside with the dogs. My fears are tricks of the light. Ghosts that can't find purchase here, with us." He reaches up to tuck a stray curl behind Will's ear. "Can yours?"

Will sighs. All these years, and he still gets caught off guard, at times, by how easily Hannibal sees him.

"No," he says after a fashion. His eyes bore holes into their dresser, staring daggers at a photo of himself on their wedding day. The image smiles up at Hannibal, ignoring Will's gaze. Hannibal had been paying attention to the photographer, though. Will finds his husband's eyes, even where he is hiding from them.

He says it again, more definitively. "No. There's nothing here for me to be afraid of." He takes a slow breath, Hannibal's gentle touches keeping him from bringing up a fresh wall. "I only... I only smell the scent of beer when it's on the breath of someone I'm killing, or thinking about killing. I can lock the bedroom door, and feel confident that no one is going to be trying the handle. I don't... hide things. There's no stash of food and money hidden in an overnight bag under the bed."

Hannibal twines his fingers with Will's own, and he smiles weakly. "The only times someone raises their voice in this house is to bark at a squirrel. And I am perfectly content with that." Will swallows. "...Would you kill me, if I tried to leave?" He asks, and he hates how his voice trembles.

Hannibal doesn't answer right away, and it makes a stone settle in Will's guts.

"I would ask you to kill me, Will. I'd sooner wish for death than live without you."

He sighs. Part relief, part fondness, part hopeless adoration. "Yeah?"

"May the last kindness that you ever offer me be that you kill me before your side of the bed goes cold, my love."

Will tries to blink away the tears rising to his eyes, lashes fluttering rapidly. "Well, then neither of us needs to be afraid," he whispers. "Can't get trapped if the lake's not frozen."

"Come here, mylimasis."

He rolls in Hannibal's hold, features crumbling when he meets his husband's eyes. Warm, nothing like his own. Hannibal cups his cheek, and the heat of his skin makes the tension in his shoulders go loose. Their lips meet once, twice. Will smiles. Hannibal is studying his face. That curiosity will be the death of them both.

"What?"

"Were you actually afraid of clowns?"

Will barks out a laugh, falling back against the mattress. "Shut up," he says with another chuckle. "Can I go to sleep now? Are you done with tonight's impromptu session, Doctor Lecter?"

"Of course, thank you for humoring me," Hannibal replies, making himself comfortable.

Will shuts his eyes, waiting for rest to overtake him and praying that their conversation won't trigger a nightmare. He can't seem to fall asleep, though. He groans softly.

"Hannibal—"

"I'm also terrified of cockroaches," Hannibal supplies immediately, and Will laughs again.

"Really?"

"Mm. When I was a boy, a cockroach fell from my bedroom ceiling and landed on my face while I was sleeping. I never recovered."

"Oh, that's—" He tries to contain his laughter. "That's awful, darlin'. I'm sorry."

"You find that funny, do you?"

"No!"

Hannibal opens one eye. "You're smiling."

"I'm smiling because you're absurd."

"So you say."

He rolls his eyes. "You're the Devil," Will insists, curling up against Hannibal's chest. "You're not allowed to be afraid of cockroaches, it ruins the mystique."

"I assure you, my love, I am flesh and bone. The same as you."

Will smiles to himself, taking Hannibal's hand and listening to the beat of the other man's heart beneath his ear.

"Yes," he whispers. "Just the same."

End Notes

the frozen lake was a metaphor did you get that did you get how the lake was a metaphor

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